

# **House Armed Services Committee**

## **DEMOCRATS**

**Ike Skelton, Ranking Member**

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### **House Leadership Schedules Vote on Stalled Intelligence Reform**

***WASHINGTON D.C.—Ranking Member, Ike Skelton (MO) made the following statement on the House floor today after the House leadership agreed to schedule a vote on S.2845, the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004.***

“Mr. Speaker, as a member of the conference committee, I rise in strong support of S.2845, the Intelligence Reform Act of 2004, and urge its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, we are making history today. This conference report represents the most profound government reform to date for meeting the unique and daunting security challenges existing in this era of terror. This bill fundamentally overhauls the structure of our nation’s intelligence community. It represents an important step in the improvement of our government’s intelligence capabilities, while at the same time preserving our ability to ensure that our military personnel have the intelligence information they need to succeed on the battlefield. More broadly, this bill promises to advance our abilities in the global fight against terrorism.

From my vantage point as the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, this conference report includes two major legislative achievements: first, it creates and empowers a new Director of National Intelligence, or DNI, to set the vision, direction, and priorities for the entire intelligence community. Second, it maintains the sanctity of the military’s “chain of command,” so that the Secretary of Defense will have the

necessary authorities to effectively manage intelligence assets and resources – particularly tactical assets on the battlefield.

The 9/11 Commission pointed out that our nation's intelligence community has suffered from a failure in imagination, focus, and organization. This bill addresses these failures with a new organization, new authorities, and management flexibility. In addition to the new DNI, the bill authorizes the National Counter Terrorism Center, or NCTC, to improve analytic vision and operational planning across departments and at the highest levels of government. Another important change is the information-sharing requirements across traditional bureaucratic barriers, or "stove-pipes." Such innovation has been suggested for years, and these provisions are long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, opportunities in this body to effect fundamental – indeed historical – change are rare. We have such an opportunity today. I commend the leaders of this conference, and I strongly support the bill before us. It is significant, necessary, unprecedented, and offers much promise to make our nation more secure.

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